

Oxford University and Its Bible Champions

Self – Guided Tour Notes

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the City of Oxford and its "dreaming spires".

The tour should take about an hour to complete. Other tour groups will be following behind us, so we will need to move quite quickly to each point of interest. Please be aware that parts of the tour take us to some narrow lanes and busy streets. Please keep to the footpaths as much as possible and do not walk on the road so as to cause hazards for cyclists, vehicles, other pedestrians including yourself!

The theme of this tour is 'Oxford University and Its Bible Champions'. We will walk through the history of this famous city as we consider some of the people who lived and worked here, among them several Bible Champions. We will also briefly consider how the University came into being with its College System, something unique to Oxford and its Sister University, Cambridge.

(1) SHELDONIAN THEATRE

Built 1669. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

Built to hold the University's ceremonies - Degree Ceremonies and Encaenia (a special annual ceremony held in June to award honorary degrees). Today it is still the venue for all University ceremonies as well as lectures and concerts.

It is one of the first buildings in England thought to have been modelled directly on a structure dating from classical antiquity - on the U-shaped Theatre of Marcellus in Rome. It was also the home of the Oxford University Press until it moved to the Clarendon Building.

When the theatre is open to the public you can, for a small charge, have a look in the main theatre and visit the cupula at the top of the building where you have 360-degree views of the city.

(2) MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

The original Ashmolean Museum - completed in 1683 it was the first public museum to be opened in England. Eventually the collection outgrew its home and was transferred to new and larger premises built in Beaumont Street in 1845. This building now houses the Museum of the History of Science. University Coat of Arms above doorway facing the Sheldonian Theatre.

University Coat of Arms Motto: "*Dominus illuminatio mea*" (The LORD is my Light), a quote from Ps 27:1. The significance of the open book and motto represents the university as a seat of learning enlightened by the Lord (compare with Day's Text April 20, 2014). Emphasises religious origins of the university.

DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY

First recorded sign scholastic activity was a schoolmaster, Theobald of Etampes, who taught in the town from about 1095-1125. This was a time highly favourable to the growth of schools, and Oxford responded to these circumstances.

King Henry I built a new royal residence in Beaumont Street – spent Easter in his new hall 1133. Oxford was increasingly used as the centre of royal government.

The increasingly elaborate organisation of economic activity and an ever-expanding government administration also called for more literate and numerate men. The Church held the monopoly on education. Scholars from among the secular clergy would take on groups of young men as paying pupils, renting houses to provide board and lodging for them and a room in which to teach them, educating them for administrative posts in both government and ecclesiastical service. This arrangement gave rise to the academic halls which were the forerunners of the colleges. By the early 14th Century there were over 120 academic halls within 200 hundred yards of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin.

By 1200 (King John), the teachers had begun to call themselves Masters and were working informally together to meet their common needs from the town. Eventually they formed a secular religious guild known as '*universitas magistrorum et scholarum*' (The Corporation of Masters and Scholars), which became shortened to 'Universitas' (The Corporation) - hence our English word 'University'.

(3) DIVINITY SCHOOL (completed 1488)

Built as a school room to teach Theology and also as a suitable place to hold the examinations, which were oral and took the form of a disputation.

Between 1439 and 1444, Duke Humfrey of Gloucester, youngest brother of Henry V, donated a large collection of about 300 books and manuscripts to the library. As they were in the process of building the Divinity School it was decided to add an upper room above it, which is still called 'Duke Humfrey's Library' and is the oldest part of the Bodleian Library. Book hanging from top of doorway arch quotes Luke 2:46 in Greek: "*They found him sitting among the doctors.*"

(4) CLARENDON BUILDING (Completed 1713)

There have only ever been at any one time three bodies entitled to print the King James Version of the Bible in England: Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the Royal Printer. The University was given its Royal Charter in 1636 which entitled them to publish and print as a Privileged Press. In 1713 the University Press moved from the Sheldonian Theatre to the Clarendon Building. The 'Learned Press' was on the left side of the archway as we are looking at it, and the 'Bible Press' on the right.

(5) HERTFORD COLLEGE BRIDGE k/a "BRIDGE OF SIGHS" (Built 1913)

NEW COLLEGE BELL TOWER (Founded 1379)

In the background beyond Hertford College bridge rises the bell tower of New College. In 1528 there was a ruthless search in Oxford for those distributing Tyndale's New Testament and other heretical books resulting in a number of prosecutions by the Warden of the College, Dr John London, a champion for the Pope.

One fellow of New College, John Quinbey, was deprived of his fellowship for heresy and was later imprisoned in the Bell Tower where he died, the account says, "half-starved with the cold and lack of food".

EDMUND HALLEY (1656-1742)

His observatory from 1703-1742 was the room projecting from the roof of the Georgian building to the left after you pass under the bridge. It was here in 1705 that Halley calculated the orbit and predicted the return of his bright comet (~76 years to orbit sun), it reappeared in 1758 as predicted (after his death).

He was interested in the possible causes of the Biblical Flood, and in 1694 he was censured by the Royal Society when he presented a paper there in which he suggested that the Flood account in the Bible may be an account of a cometary impact.

(6) HERTFORD COLLEGE

Hertford claims William Tyndale as one of its sons because he studied at Magdalen Hall, which was later incorporated into Hertford College. Tyndale took his BA in 1512, followed by his MA in 1515. The famous portrait of Tyndale, occasionally used in the Society's publications, hangs in the refectory above the main entrance to the college.



Tyndale's translations of both the Old and New Testaments were taken directly from the Hebrew and Greek. In his translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, he used and explained the Divine Name. This was the very first time it appeared in an English text designed to be read by ordinary people who did not read Latin. Tyndale biographer David Daniell states: "readers of Tyndale's Genesis must have felt that in more than one sense they were meeting the God of the OT for the first time."

For Tyndale the scriptures are their own interpreter, and they are the only source of truth for the Christian Church. He said 'Search the scriptures, for by them may ye try all doctrine'. That is, every doctrine and way of life has to measure up to God's word, and Christians must be able to read and understand the scriptures for themselves, otherwise they would not be able to judge whether the writings of any doctor of the church were true or not.

(7) SCHOOLS QUADRANGLE

Duke Humfrey's books scattered during religious upheavals 1530-1560 during which period the University became impoverished. Visitations to the universities during the reign of Edward VI examined the libraries and removed all books that they felt promoted "Popish superstitions". All of Duke Humfrey's collection was removed. Only 3 of his books have ever found their way back to the Bodleian.

In 1598 the University library became derelict. Thomas Bodley a rich, retired merchant adventurer completely refitted the library and restocked with books mainly at his own expense, and it was officially reopened in 1602. He went on to build the Schools Quadrangle where you are standing. Built in Gothic style but includes elements of classical architecture on the tower (called the Tower of the Five Orders): 5 orders of columns of classical Greek architecture. Illustrates a growing interest in all things classical in the early 17th Century.

The Bodleian library collection currently amounts to about 14 million volumes. Like the British Library, the Bodleian is a copyright deposit library. As such a free copy of every publication copyrighted in the UK is sent here. Some of the valuable items it holds include Jane Austen's manuscript of 'The Watsons', Mary Shelley's manuscript of 'Frankenstein', Handel's conducting score of 'Messiah', two first folios of Shakespeare's plays, 4 of the surviving 17 'engrossments' of Magna Carta - 3 of which date from 1217...

Bodleian holdings also include several Bibles including a Geneva Bible and several manuscripts of parts of the Wyclif Bible and one complete Wyclif Bible dating from the early 15th Century, a Gutenberg Bible. The library has been receiving the Watchtower and Awake! magazines since 1975, and hold Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence from 1879 - 1919.

It also has copies of the 1961, 1984 and 2013 editions of the NWT along with other publications of the Society.

(Exit the Schools Quadrangle via the south entrance into Radcliffe Square.)

(8) RADCLIFFE SQUARE

Radcliffe Camera (completed 1748)

Designed to house a library of science textbooks bequeathed to the University by John Radcliffe, a famous physician in Oxford. The library forms the nucleus of what is now the Radcliffe Science Library. It is called a Camera (Latin for an arched or vaulted roof, chamber or building). It contains 2 reading rooms.

Beneath the lawn to the north is an underground bookstore built in 1912, connected to the Camera and, by a subway, with the Old Bodleian. The roof of the bookstore is only 9 inches (23 cm) below the cobbled surface of the square.

(9) ALL SOUL'S COLLEGE (Founded 1438)

Sir William Blackstone, a British jurist, judge and politician of the eighteenth century, was made a Fellow of All Souls College in 1743. He is famous for his collection of "Commentaries on the Laws of England" (1765-1769) in 4 Volumes. Designed to provide a complete overview of English law. The Ten Commandments were at the heart of Blackstone's philosophy.

American academic Robert Ferguson notes that "all our formative documents — the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Federalist Papers — were drafted by attorneys steeped in Sir William Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England".

(Proceed toward High Street via the gap between St Mary's Church and All Souls College. Turn left onto High Street and go on to The Queen's College, stopping at the corner of Queen's Lane.)

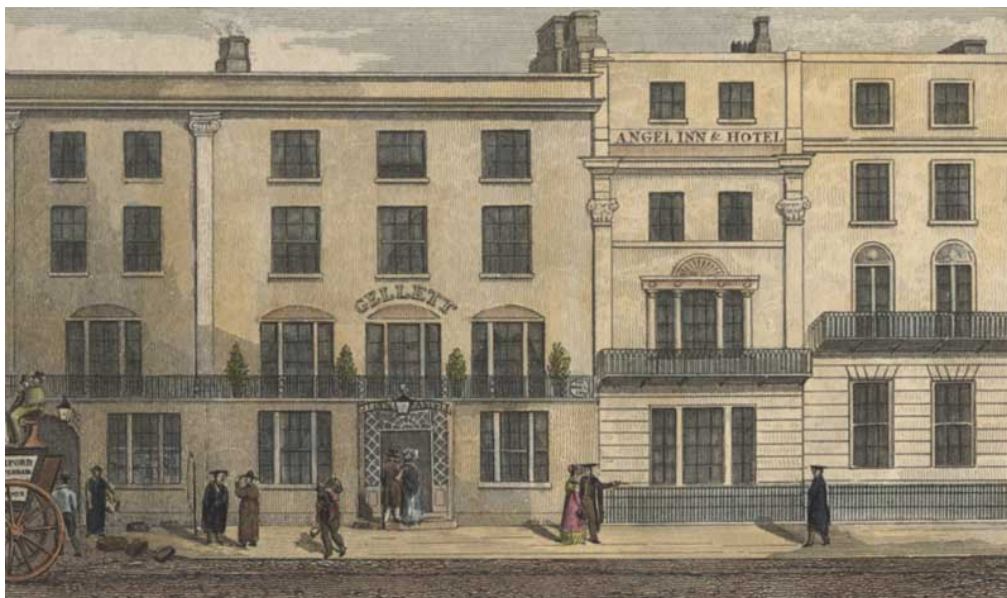
(10) OLDEST COFFEE HOUSE

The social custom of coffee-drinking was brought to England from the Middle East region in the 17th century.

Anthony Wood, 17th century antiquarian and diarist, mentions the Angel Inn (situated across the road) a number of times in his diaries. In 1650 he wrote, "This yeare Jacob a Jew opened a coffey house at the Angel in the parish of St. Peter in the East Oxon; and there it was by some, who delighted in noveltie, drank." This was the first coffee house to be opened in England.

The engraving below shows the Angel Inn in the 1820s. In 1876 most of the inn was demolished to make way for the Examination Schools, but its coffee room (the two right-hand bays shown below) still survive as the shops now numbered 83 and 84 High Street. They retain their original plasterwork fan decoration and wrought iron balustrades on the first floor. The first coffee house was on the first floor of what is now The Grand Café.

A second coffee house was set up on the corner of Queen's Lane in 1654. This is the only one that has been continuously a coffee house since it opened, and is now the oldest coffee house in England.



MAGDALEN COLLEGE (Founded 1458) (*East end of High Street – looks like big church*)

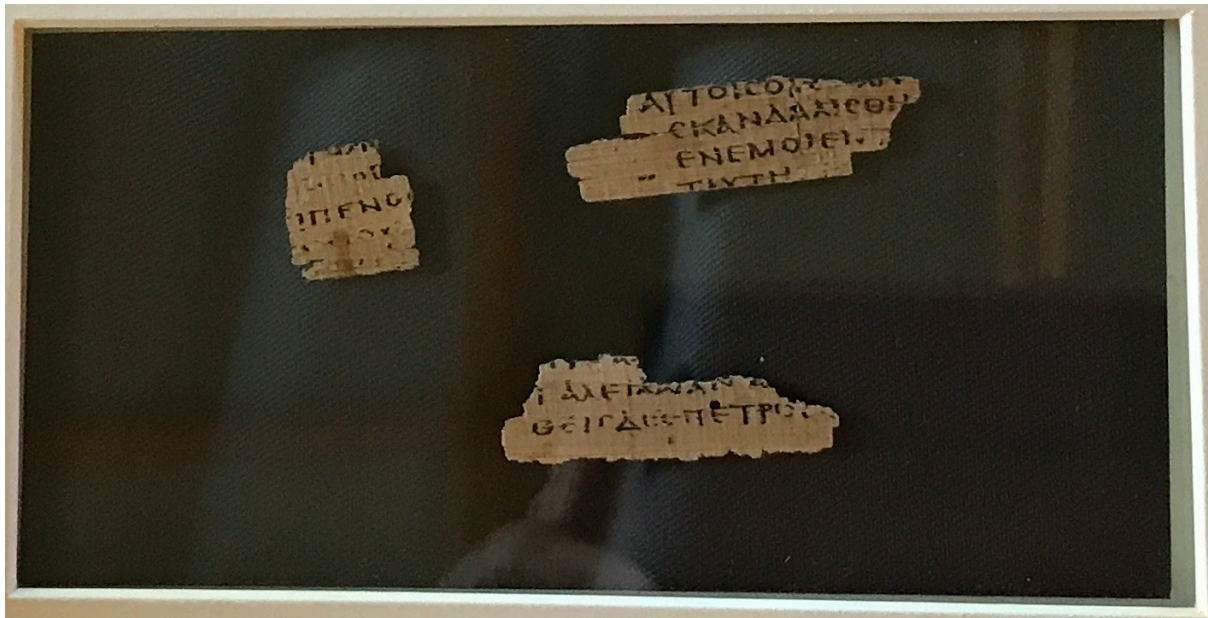
At the time Tyndale came to Oxford, Magdalen Hall occupied a site now within the grounds of Magdalen College. It moved near to, and was later incorporated into, Hertford College.

The bell tower was completed in the early 1500s, just before William Tyndale arrived in Oxford about 1506.

MAGDALEN MANUSCRIPT (See Society video on Matthew's Gospel from 2023 Convention)

WT 15/2/96 - Three tiny fragments of a manuscript of the Gospel of Matthew, known as P64, have been in the possession of Magdalen College in Oxford since 1901. For some time, scholars believed that they dated back to the early second century C.E.

In 1995 Carsten P. Thiede, a papyrologist from Germany, conducted a thorough examination of the fragments. He concluded they were "a Christian codex fragment of the first century, perhaps (though not necessarily) predating AD 70." The new date given to the Magdalen Manuscript is, however, contested by some scholars.



(11) ST EDMUND HALL (Founded circa 1315)

Stronghold of Wyclif's followers, the Lollards, in the early 15th Century. William Taylor, Principal of Edmund Hall 1405-1406 and Peter Payne Principal 1411-1412. They were both Lollards, Taylor was repeatedly investigated for heresy and was burnt in 1423. In 1413 Payne fled to the continent and became a leading figure in the Hussite (Jan Huss) movement.

Lollardy persisted throughout the 15th century and a whole body of writings from their hands survive including 250 manuscripts of the Wycliffite translation of the Bible in whole or part.

William Tyndale also was involved with the publication of Lollard tracts. Sir Thomas More wrote of Tyndale: "no man can please him, but Wyclif, the first founder here (in England) of that abominable heresy."

(11a) QUEEN'S COLLEGE (Founded 1341)

Built in honour of Edward III's wife, Philippa, in 1341. Rebuilt early 18th Century. It was at Queen's College that Wyclif was able to obtain rooms and was resident from at least 1374 until the time he left Oxford in 1381.

Manuscripts in the Bodleian indicate that the work of translating the whole Bible into English was centred at Queen's College early in the 1370s at the time Wyclif was there. While some question whether Wyclif was personally involved with translation, it is generally agreed that Wyclif initiated and inspired the project from Queen's laying down rules of procedure for the translators to follow, supervising and correcting their work, and by 1384 Wyclif and his assistants had produced a first revision. The Tetragrammaton features in 5 of the stained glass windows in the college chapel.....



(Cross the road with care, and make your way back westward up the High Street)

(12) UNIVERSITY COLLEGE (Founded 1249)

The Tetragrammaton features in a window of University College chapel:



BOYLE PLAQUE (*on wall at west end of University College on High Street*)

ROBERT BOYLE (1627-1691)

Famous scientist known for his interest in gases. 'Boyle's Law' named after him.

Boyle was a devout Christian, and a remarkable student of the Bible. He studied Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic in order to be able to read the Bible in its original languages.

Known for his enthusiasm for all schemes directed to propagating the gospel throughout the world, he took a great interest in translating the bible for missionary work. This was a new concept - to make the Bible available in native languages so that people could be led to Christ through their own reading of the scriptures. This was in contrast to the Catholic tradition of sending missionary priests to preach Catholic doctrine.

He funded the printing of several bible translations – Lithuanian (1657); Turkish (1666); Gospels and Acts in Malay (1677); Irish (1685); and the very first bible printed in America in Massachusetts Indian (1663). The Bibles in Irish and Massachusetts Indian both contain the divine name Jehovah (See article about him in: Awake! March 2013 pages 14-15).

ROBERT HOOKE

In 1665 Hooke invented a microscope and examined a slice of cork bark thin enough to let light pass through a simple lens. He saw that the cork was made up of little box-like structures that reminded him of cells in a honeycomb – hence he coined the name 'cell'.

(Keep walking west along High Street, then turn left after QUOD restaurant, down Magpie Lane into Merton Street)

(13) MERTON COLLEGE (Founded about 1264)

Merton, (*opposite and to the left*), abuts the old city wall and some of its original medieval buildings survive, dating from 1308-1379. The chapel was completed in 1294, and a transept added in 1367-8. John Wyclif is shown on Merton records (the Bursar's roll) to be a probationer fellow (or Junior Fellow) here in 1356. This means he had taken his Bachelor of Arts degree by this time. So, he would have worshipped in the college's Chapel (*opposite*).

JOHN WYCLIF

Wyclif had an amazing reputation as a scholar. He excelled in oral examinations and in disputation and debate. In philosophy it was said he was second to none. He was called the 'flower of Oxford' (*flos Oxoniae*). He was a prodigious writer and he had a capacious and retentive memory. He became the foremost doctor of his time, the university's leading philosopher and he was used in government service.

Wyclif's outspokenness on the eucharist and other matters resulted in his eventually being called to account for his ideas. Due to pressure from the Church, the University reluctantly expelled him from Oxford in October 1381. He retired to his living of Lutterworth where he died of a stroke 3 years later on 31 December 1384.

His writings indicate that he had a contentious personality and he was very scathing of the monks and friars. He recognised the huge task of evangelism saying "it is necessary to preach all the way to the very ends of the earth".

(14) ORIEL COLLEGE (Founded 1326)

Stained glass window, installed in 1767.

'The Presentation of the Saviour in the Temple'. Scene of baby Jesus in the arms of prophet Simeon. To his left – head of prophetess Anna. Below her to left – bearded face of Joseph. Below him, kneeling - Mary. Far right (at edge of window) - High Priest. Note turban with holy sign of dedication showing the Tetragrammaton (in reverse) (Exodus 28:36 – 'Holiness belongs to Jehovah').



CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE (Founded 1517) (opposite Oriel college)

Dr. John Rainolds (1549-1607), president of Corpus Christi, was a prominent delegate at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. It was he who suggested to King James I that a new translation of the Bible was needed. He subsequently became an important member of the 1st Oxford Company of academics involved in producing the King James Version. (Six companies with two each in London, Cambridge and Oxford).

The 1st Oxford Company was responsible for revising the OT prophets, Isaiah to Malachi. The 2nd Oxford Company (meeting in Merton College, next door) worked on The Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and Revelation. Translators met weekly at Rainolds' lodgings in the College (above the main gate) to discuss progress and translation issues until the AV was published in 1611.

(15) CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE (rear entrance) (Founded 1524)

Charles Dodgson (alias Lewis Carroll), a Maths don at Christ Church was a friend of the Dean, Henry Liddell and his family. Dean Liddell's youngest daughter Alice was Dodgson's inspiration for the main character in two stories he wrote for children - 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Alice Through the Looking Glass'. Dean Henry Liddell along with Robert Scott produced Liddell & Scott's Greek Lexicon now in its 9th Edition.

William Penn was an undergraduate of Christ Church, and went on to found the colony of Pennsylvania and its capital Philadelphia in the 1680s. Penn became a Quaker and was persecuted for his religious beliefs. In 1699 he returned to Pennsylvania where amongst other accomplishments he issued the Charter of Privileges which guaranteed the religious freedom that he could not secure in England.

(Follow the directions on the map across Oriel Square, down Bear Lane, turning right at The Bear pub and up Alfred Street on to High Street. Cross High Street using the pedestrian crossing and enter Turl Street to the right of The Mitre.)

(16) LINCOLN COLLEGE (Founded 1427)

Founded in 1427 by Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln to counter the Wycliffite heresy. Just one year after founding this college, he gave orders for Wyclif's body to be exhumed from his grave in Lutterworth, his bones burned and the ashes thrown into the River Swift (see our DVD -The Bible a Book of Fact and Prophecy).

In 1726 John Wesley was a fellow here and set up his 'Holy Club', which met in his rooms. The club met together to read, study scripture. In 1732, the term 'Methodists' was first coined to describe this group of bible students, as it reflected the method and order of their lives. From about 1740 Wesley said "I look upon the world as my parish". Unfortunately for him he was excluded from most parish churches, so he travelled the length and breadth of England on horseback preaching in the open, and organising his followers into small groups or societies. This is how the Methodist Church movement started.

(Go to the railings at the far end of the entrance arch. Look to the right. You will see a bust of Wesley between the windows of what was his room.)

(Turn right on leaving Lincoln – mind the traffic/cyclists! - and continue up Turl Street to turn right onto Broad Street. Continue until you arrive near Oxford Campus Stores on your left.)

(17) **BROAD STREET CROSS** (cobbled cross in centre of road at east end of Broad Street)



When Queen Mary came to the throne, she restored the supremacy of the Pope in England and revived all heresy laws dating back to 1401 including the death penalty by burning at the stake. In her short reign (5 years) about 290 protestants were burned alive, especially those who were prominent advocates of the Protestant Reformation. The Oxford Martyrs were examples of these.

Hugh Latimer (aged 70), and **Nicholas Ridley** (aged 53) were burned together on 16 October 1555. As the fire was brought to them Latimer said to Ridley: *"Be of good comfort Master Ridley and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out"*. Latimer died quickly. Ridley on the other hand, died agonisingly, the fire smouldered damply. *"Lord! Have mercy on me"* he cried, *"let the fire come to me, I cannot burn."*



Thomas Cranmer was 67 years old and Mary had particular reason to target him because he was involved in the 'divorce' of her mother, Catherine of Aragon, from Henry VIII, effectively annulling Henry's marriage to Catherine and making Mary illegitimate, so that she lost her accession rights to the throne. Cranmer was forced to watch the burning of Latimer and Ridley and, 5 months later, on 21 March 1556 he too was burned at the same spot.

The Martyr's Memorial in St Giles', erected in 1843, (*walk around the corner to the right, where the buses stop, and past the church. The memorial is just beyond the far end of the church*), commemorates the martyrs. A Lantern slide of the memorial features in The Photo Drama of Creation.



CONCLUSION

This brings the tour to an end. Unfortunately, we have only been able to touch on just a little of the rich history of this famous city, and point out some of its links with the Bible.

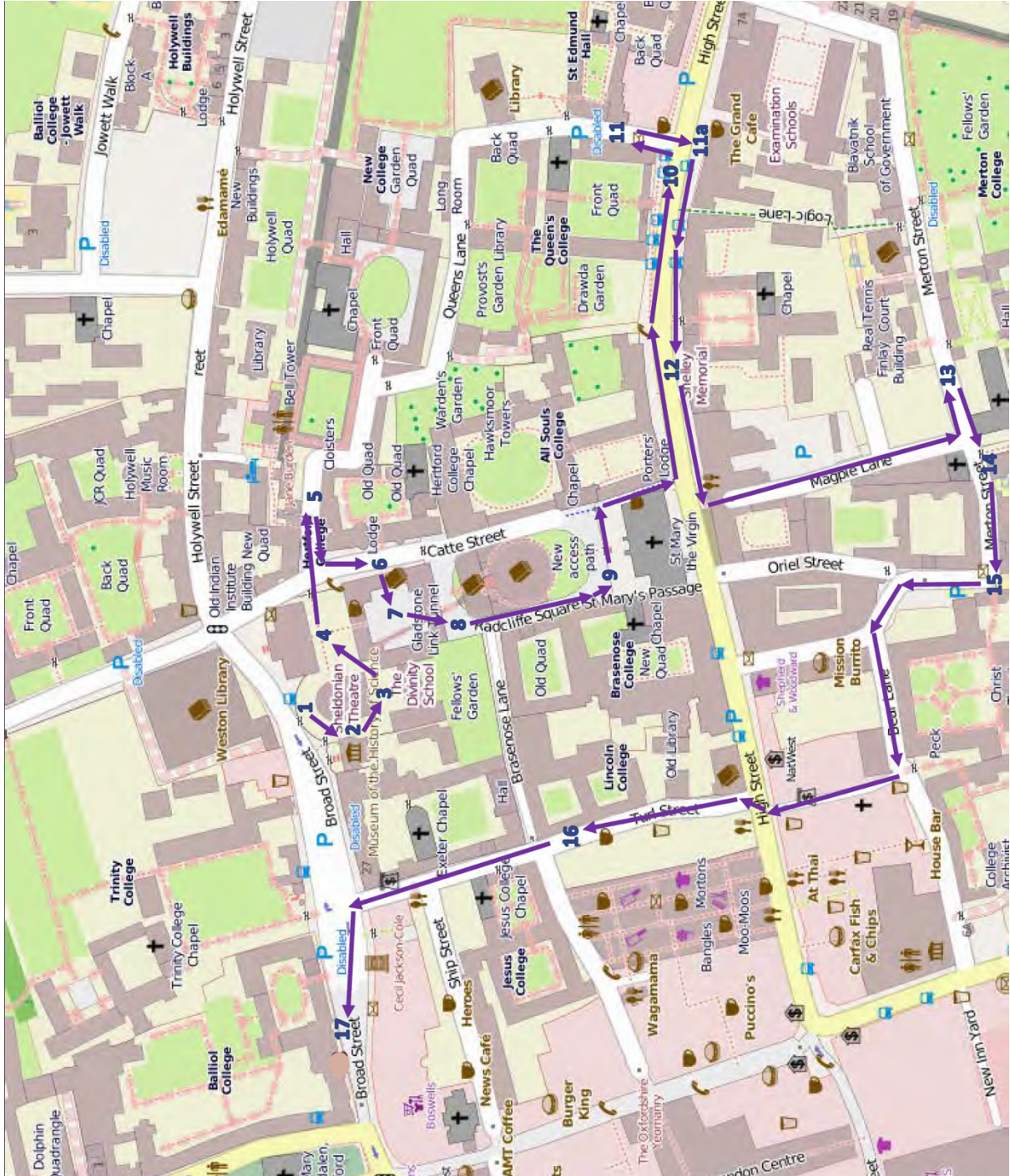
We do hope you have not only enjoyed the tour but also come to know a little better some of the Bible Champions who contributed to Jehovah's ongoing purpose to make the Bible available to all people during the time of the end.

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East



West